

Meeting Minutes

Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
July 28, 2005

BLM Carson City Field Office
Carson City, Nevada

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I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

9:07 a.m., Thursday, July 28, 2005 – Meeting Called to Order by Chairman Roullier with the following members of the RAC present.

SIERRA FRONT – NORTHWESTERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Council Member	Resource/Expertise	Thurs. 7/28
William Roullier – Chair	Transportation/ROW	X
Larie Trippet – Vice Chair	Public-At-Large	X
Laura S. Crane	Environmental	X
John E. Dicks	Recreation	X
Rochanne Downs	Native Americans	
James Eidel	Wildlife	X
John Falen	Nevada Cattlemen	X
John Gebhardt	State Agency	X
Jerry Hepworth	Energy/Minerals	X
Patricia Herzog	Elected Official	
John Mudge	Mining	X
Ernest Paine	Livestock	X
Vernon Schulze	Wild Horses	X
Sherm Swanson	Academic	X
D. Craig Young	Archeology	X

BLM staff present – Don Hicks, Field Manager, Carson City Field Office (CCFO); Rodger Bryan, Acting Associate Field Manager, Winnemucca Field Office (WFO); Elayn Briggs, Associate Field Manager, CCFO; Mark Struble, Public Affairs Specialist, CCFO; Jamie Thompson, Public Affairs Officer, WFO; Nancy Thompson, Secretary, WFO; Jo Simpson, Chief, Office of Communications, Nevada State Office (NSO); Russ Suminski, Lead Rangeland Management Specialist, CCFO; Melody Stehwien, Law Enforcement, CCFO; Tom Crawford, Pine Nut Land Use Plan Team Leader, CCFO; Bryant Smith, Deputy Assistant Field Manager Non Renewable Resources, CCFO.

Public present – Richard Hilton, Friends of Sand Mountain; Skip Canfield, Nevada Division of State Lands; Dick Huntsberger, permittee; Ralph Mantz; Robert Ballou, Planning Group Pine Nut Plan; Gale Thomssen; Sharon Vonnegut; Susan Lynch; Rita Suminski, BIA; Marti Searay; Bev Anderson, Pine Nut Group; Laurel Arett, Pine Nut CAC for BLM; Gretchen Walsh, Pine Nut Pres.; Walter Howe, Dayton, Nevada resident; Joyce Howe, Dayton, Nevada resident; Beth Scott, Carson City Equestrian Alliance; Pat Copplin, Pine Nut Plan; Lee Simpkins, Sierra Pacific Power Co.; Brian Doyal, Pine Nut Mountain Trail Association (PNMTA); Frank Evans, wild horses; Dave Malone, Sierra Pacific Power Co.; Barbara Copplin, Dayton, Nevada resident; A. Jo Ann Neners, Washoe Tribe; Lana Hicks, Washoe Tribe; Heather Bovast, Douglas County; Stan Gawonski PNMTA; Nate Littrell, PNMTA; Rick Gray, City of Fallon; Michon Eben, Reno/Sparks Indian Colony; Jodi Stephens, U. S. Congressman Jim Gibbons' Office; Jeannette Dahl, Director Lahontan Valley Environmental Alliance; Dan Peterson, California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA).

II. Summary of Motions

MOVED – by John Falen that the Wild Horses and Burros Standards and Guidelines be accepted as presented.

SECOND – by Jerry Hepworth.

DISCUSSION –

APPROVED – by acclamation.

MOVED – By Jerry Hepworth that the Chair draft a letter to send to Bob Abbey expressing the appreciation of the RAC for his years of service as BLM Nevada State Director.

SECOND – By John Dicks.

DISCUSSION – Jerry Hepworth asked that Mark Struble and Jamie Thompson help the Chair draft the letter. The amendment was accepted by the Second.

APPROVED – by acclamation.

MOVED – by Larie Trippet that the RAC create a subgroup of interested RAC members and the public to work on the Pine Nut Mountain RMP Amendment and act as an advisory group to the RAC.

SECOND – by John Dicks.

DISCUSSION –

APPROVED – by acclamation.

MOVED – by John Dicks that the RAC support an increase in fees to support the costs of the users of Sand Mountain so that the users will be supporting the services provided for them.

SECOND – by Ernie Paine.

APPROVED – with one abstention by Larie Trippet.

III. Summary of Action Assignments

- Jim Eidel asked Rodger Bryan to convey to Gail Givens that the RAC is really interested in the “grazing to remove cheat grass” issue and would like more detail on the conclusions from the two studies and the plans for next year and a field trip to the sites sometime in the future.
- WFO asked RAC members for any feedback they may have on a proposed plan to ask permittees to inspect and report the condition of the range improvements on their allotments.
- The RAC asked Jamie Thompson and Mark Struble to help draft a letter of appreciation to Bob Abbey.
- WFO and CCFO were asked by the RAC to report at the October meeting on how much land is available for disposal, what the status is of the process for this land, what land has already been identified for disposal, and the acquisition process.

- Tom Crawford was asked by the RAC to make sure all the interest groups are covered in the Pine Nut Plan Amendment Subgroup and make sure the names are confirmed and bring this information back to the RAC in October.
- CCFO was asked to provide to the RAC a breakdown of where fees at Sand Mountain are going and estimated future costs. Larie Trippet asked that this information also be provided to Richard Hilton for posting on the Friends of Sand Mountain website.
- Both field offices were asked to provide at a future meeting information on what monitoring data they have, how many allotments have been monitored to what extent, what monitoring BLM plans to do and has not been able to do and a recommendation from the agency that they would like the RAC to endorse. [NOTE: This does not necessarily have to be presented at the Tri-RAC meeting in October, but at some RAC meeting in the future.]
- Don Hicks said he would provide information requested by Frank Evans, member of the public, as to whether the HMA in the Pine Nuts that is being reduced by 20% is going to be expanded anywhere else and whether the water source is going to be expanded anywhere else.
- Don Hicks was asked by Larie Trippet to furnish Dan Petersen with information concerning the nine citations written at Sand Mountain over Memorial Day Weekend - what area was it that was closed? Were citations or warnings given? What action closed that area?

IV. Minutes from the Meeting in Winnemucca, Nevada, April 27 & 28, 2005

MOVED – by Jerry Hepworth to Approve.

SECOND – by Vern Schulze.

DISCUSSION – The following corrections to the minutes were requested:

On page 3, motion one, Jim Eidel asked that his name be added to the list of RAC members on the Wild Horses and Burros Guidelines Subgroup.

On page 13, paragraph 2, Jim Eidel asked that he not be included in the Granite Fox RAC Subgroup. On page 14, paragraph 4, change “dora” to “dore.”

APPROVED – by acclamation with above corrections.

V. Field Managers’ Reports

A. Carson City Field Manager Don Hick’s Report

1. WRITTEN SUMMARY OF THE REPORT WAS DISTRIBUTED.
2. ADDITIONAL ITEMS COVERED ORALLY.
 - a. The CCFO had the 285-acre McClellan Peak fire in the last few days. Fires on the district have been a mix of lightning

and human caused. We are way above the 10-year average for acres burned in Nevada. Mark Struble told the group that 4.3 million acres have burned nationally this summer to date. Most of the big fires in Nevada have been in the Las Vegas and Elko Districts. There was a 4,500-acre fire near Orovada in the Winnemucca District in July. Fire is an ongoing story. Sherm Swanson mentioned that the ecological threshold for red brome has been reached in the southern areas of the state.

- b. All fuel reduction treatments are completed. There was a 40-acre treatment in Alpine County.

Jim Eidel asked if there was a prescribed burn in the Pine Nuts. It was mentioned in one of the sage-grouse groups. Don said he would get details for Jim when there was a break in the meeting.

- c. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) Fire Education Corps crew is back and working with home owners on establishing defensible space.
- d. BLM hopes to have the North Douglas County land sale in October. The land will probably be used for commercial/residential purposes. There are two parcels totaling 206 acres. The combined appraised fair market value of the parcels is \$16.4 million.

Vern Schulze asked if this goes into the Southern Nevada [SNPLMA] money. Don answered the money from these land sales will go into the BACA fund for use throughout the state, not just where the money is generated. The U. S. treasury does not get any of this money. Vern asked if it is in the purview of the BLM to decide what the money is used for. Jo Simpson answered that it is an interagency decision.

Sherm Swanson asked if those funds will be available for acquisition of conservation easements along the river. Don answered we are trying to get the Southern Nevada money for those acquisitions. An acquisition that is in process now will serve as the template for more acquisitions.

- e. North Valleys Rights-of-Way (ROWs) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) deals with two applications to pump water from the north valleys and transport it to the greater Reno area. There are on going discussions. The California delegation is concerned about possible effects to ground water in California. The Nevada state water engineer determines how much water will be taken, not BLM. BLM decides on the ROWs only. Don added it is hard to say where this will go. We have control over the

granting of the ROWs. It is still out for public comment. We have had public meetings.

Jim Eidel asked which BLM staff person is responsible for the EIS. Don answered Terri Knutson.

John Dicks asked, assuming removing the water from the basin would have a significant impact on the environment of residents across the state line would this be relevant to the EIS concerning building the transmission line. Don answered the state does have a model for this which is in the document. Whether it is in BLM's purview to connect that with the actual construction of the pipeline, I don't have the authority to tell private land owners who have the water rights what they can do.

Jim Eidel asked if the document addresses fragmentation of sage-grouse habitat. This sounds like something the RAC could be involved in. Don answered he is not sure, but he doesn't think so.

John Falen commented we could spend a lot of time on this. We don't have time to deal with the issue today. This issue has been ongoing for the past three years.

John Dicks commented if you're going to put in a pipe line and not analyze the issues with the wildlife, I would not allow someone to stampede me into the other area.

John Mudge commented it strikes me that there is a legal issue in what you need to study in the NEPA document. It seems to me that you would need to study some of those issues. Don answered those impacts are in the document.

Jerry Hepworth asked if it's not a bright line.

- f. Bill Roullier commented it's in the document where the water comes from and what it's going to be used for. CCFO has completed a field-office-wide Environmental Assessment (EA) of geothermal, oil and gas lease applications and wind and solar ROW applications pending up to 2002. The master plan is to design it so companies that want to lease will know where they can operate with no restriction, moderate restriction or cannot operate at all. The field office has 65 pending applications. Don told the RAC there is a national wind energy document that is being used as a template for the office-wide assessment.
- g. The Pine Nut RMP is still a management process in progress. Some changes have been made to the team dynamics. Don told the RAC he hopes this will move the process forward. Staff will talk to the RAC more about this later in the meeting.

- h. The Salt Wells geothermal plant will be the first new geothermal plant in the state.
- i. Yerington Mine management has been placed in the BLM State Office. CCFO has responsibility for site security and has put signs around the south portion of the mine asking the public to stay out. EPA has asked Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) to provide more signing. This issue is still in negotiation.
- j. CCFO is ready to start the Mineral County Denton-Rawhide Mine RMP Amendment. The mining company is talking about using the open pit as a land fill.
- k. BLM is still working with local constituents to get the kiosk put up and the signs in place at the Ruhestroth Emergency Vehicle Closure area. BLM has had pretty good success being on the same page with the Pine Nut Trails Association. Implementation is slow.
- l. There has been nothing new on wild horses and burros since the last RAC meeting. There are about 1,000 head in the Snows holding facility.

Laura Crane asked about the Carson River conservation easements. You talked about using this as a template. This is agriculture based. I would encourage you to also use a template that is wildlife based. Don answered we will use both depending on the land base that the easement is on.

B. *Winnemucca Acting Associate Field Manager Rodger Bryan's Report*

- 1. WRITTEN SUMMARY OF THE REPORT WAS DISTRIBUTED.
- 2. ADDITIONAL ITEMS COVERED ORALLY.
 - a. Rodger offered apologies for Gail Givens, Winnemucca Field Manager, not being at the meeting. Gail is fishing in Vancouver.
 - b. The photo on the top of the report is of a successful defensible space demonstration project in Unionville. Jamie Thompson attended. There will be a news release out next week describing the project in more detail.
 - c. The WFO should exceed targets in fuel management this fiscal year. Staff is working to get planning for next year's fuels projects completed early so that the plans are on the shelf and ready to go as soon as the projects are approved. The BLM State Office is working on an Instruction Memorandum (IM) to protect healthy landscapes first. Sherm Swanson asked if Rodger could define healthy. Rodger answered trying to protect sagebrush sites that we have now because we have lost 60 percent of the healthy sagebrush sites in our district. Sherm commented we have

a lot of sagebrush that has crossed the threshold into the shrub state. I think you are right to protect the sagebrush areas, but there are some other areas that would benefit from wildfire.

- d. Fires in the district have only been 1 to 15 acres in size, except for the 4,500-acre North Valley Fire near Orovada. There was an incident on that fire where one of our fire crews was trying to set up an anchor point on the west side of U.S. Highway 95 when erratic winds caused the fire to burn over and destroy a heavy engine. One firefighter from a nearby crew was overcome by smoke while attempting to put out the burning engine. He was evacuated, treated and released from Humboldt General Hospital.

John Falen commented that except for burning up the engine the fire was well managed. That needs to be recognized. Rodger commented a lot of that was due to support from the Wildfire Support Group. John continued, I think Mike Whalen [Incident Commander] did a great job. Rodger thanked him and said he would pass that on to Mike.

- e. Fire restrictions went into effect July 22. Permits will only be issued out of the field office this year.
- f. Severity resources received funding in June and July and are expected to receive it for the rest of the summer.
- g. An SCA Fire Prevention group is stationed in the WFO this season to help with fire prevention education in Winnemucca and nearby communities.
- h. The Wildfire Support Group did play a really important part in the North Valley Fire. They have also worked to remove and graze cheat grass to make the fires a little smaller if they do occur. We had a really good spring this year with moisture which caused a second crop of cheat grass that affected some of the “grazing to remove cheat grass fuels” studies this year.

Jim Eidel commented this program was presented at the RAC meeting about three years ago. From the sentence “There was some reduction of cheat grass loading on one allotment, but a second crop of cheat grass negated most of the desired affect” we could assume that the study was successful in concluding that cheat grass would support livestock. John Falen commented that cheat grass is probably one of the strongest feeds for livestock in the spring. The only down side for cheat grass is its vulnerability to fire. Contrary to what all the scientists believe, cows can do well on cheat grass after it dries up.

Jim asked if we can also assume that the study has been successful in reducing the fuel load. John answered because we had a really good spring the cheat grass grew again. You can put the cattle back in there if you have them available. Sometimes because of the needs of livestock management it's hard to get the cattle back in there. Jim asked if there is any going back once the cattle graze it. Sherm Swanson commented if the cheat grass fire cycle is going the cheat grass comes back. Maybe the cheat grass should be grazed in the fall. The fuel that we grew this year will still be a problem in future years. The livestock grazing can still be used in future years in the fall and winter when fires may be a problem. Jerry Hepworth commented, in my experience in mine reclamation, the grazing permittee was also the underlying claim owner, and grazing cattle did not ruin the reclamation effort. Well understood, well timed grazing is the key.

Jim Eidel asked Rodger to convey to Gail Givens that this group is really interested in this issue. Maybe we could get more detail on the conclusions from the two studies and the plans for next year. Rodger answered we won't have the results from what happened this year for a while. Jim continued maybe we could visit these sites when we meet in Winnemucca in the next couple of years. What we know, what we think we know, what we're learning needs to be built into the Winnemucca RMP.

John Dicks asked if wild horses eat the same things as cattle. John Falen answered that's impractical. The answer is no.

- i. Two subgroups have been formed. The subgroup for the Granite Fox Coal-Fired Power Plant EIS is still in the planning stages.

Jerry Hepworth, chair of the Granite Fox Subgroup, told the RAC he has talked to Fred Holzel, WFO Planning and Environmental Coordinator. He will probably meet sometime in September with Gail Givens and Fred to put together a kickoff meeting and find out what part the subgroup will have in the process.

Over 500 comments were received on the Granite Fox Power Plant. An initial review indicates more letters were received opposing the proposal than letters favoring it. Most of the comments concerned air, water, socio-economics and cultural concerns.

There was a problem in transmitting BLM email invitations to the first meeting of the Winnemucca RMP subgroup. They will meet again tomorrow.

j. BLM has conditionally protested the water rights applications by Granite Fox to maintain BLM standing if studies show a detrimental effect to these areas. BLM filed conditional protests for the Aquatrac proposals to test drill for water for the same reason as above.

Craig Young asked if the Granite Fox applications are similar to the North Valleys applications. Rodger answered yes.

k. Four applications have been processed for met towers in the Bloody Runs, the Sonomas and the Granites. BLM has taken the stance in Winnemucca where these are proposed in sage-grouse areas to analyze them with EAs rather than CXs and to let the applicants know there could be some issues with sage-grouse.

l. Golden Phoenix has proposed the underground mining of molybdenum ore 10 miles southeast of Denio Junction. We expect the draft EA in the next week or so.

m. New Sleeper Mine has proposed expanding its exploration efforts at the Sleeper Mine.

Jim Eidel asked the status of the proposed wetland. Rodger answered the wetland is dry. Part of the proposal was to turn off the water. The water has been turned off.

Sherm Swanson asked if there will be fishing in the lake. John Gebhardt answered that there are fish in it, if they ever stop mining...

n. Century Gold is interested in getting started on the EA process for the Grand Trunk Canyon on split estate lands. There is a question on the validity of the lands. The Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) has ruled in favor of the mining claimant.

o. Two different areas have been nominated for competitive land sales. The sales are supposed to take place in December of this year.

p. WFO has received eight applications for permits to drill geothermal exploration and production wells. One application is near Gerlach. The others are located on the west side of Blue Mountain.

q. There have been no wild horse and burro gathers since the last report to the RAC. Rodger pointed out that the sentence in the report "a proposed Decision and EA for establishing Appropriate Management Levels (AML) for the South Buffalo North Stillwater and Tobin HMAs" should read "South Buffalo *Allotment* in the North Stillwater and Tobin HMAs." The Pine Forest Allotment Final Multiple Use Decision (FMUD) should be issued soon.

Jim Eidel asked when you set AML do you take into account the horses moving out of the area. Rodger answered we consider that when we try to determine what the AML will be. Jim asked if determination of bird brood areas is taken into account in this area. Rodger answered we have transmitters on birds in the areas. Most of our AMLs have been set. We will probably address some of this in our upcoming RMP.

Several gathers are coming up this fall generally west of Lovelock sometime in November in the Jackson Mountains and McGee Mountains. Staff is monitoring use.

- r. Staff is working on transfers and permit renewals for range. Western Watersheds Project asked for and received dismissal of its appeal of the Soldier Meadows Allotment FMUD and filed a complaint in District Court. The hearing date on the appeal of the Hot Springs Peak Allotment FMUD is set for the week of October 3, 2005.
- s. At the April meeting WFO asked the RAC for feedback on a proposed plan to ask permittees to inspect and report the condition of the range improvements on their allotments. WFO would appreciate getting any feedback the RAC members may have.

Jim Eidel commented this isn't working a damn with the Forest Service.

- t. The Northwest Distinct Population Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) Recovery team is working on fish barriers for McDermitt Creek basin to keep the exotics from mixing.
- u. The Dave Canyon Traditional Cultural Property in the Stillwater Range has been listed on the National Register.
- v. A draft Lovelock Cave Back Country Byway Children's Activity Book has been completed.
- w. BLM is in the final stages of putting together the draft EA for Water Canyon.
- x. The NCA RAC subgroup meeting in June looked at OHV use and management in the Black Rock.
- y. The Burning Man Event is scheduled for August 29 through September 5.
- z. Friends of Black Rock High Rock are hosting a Perseid Meteor Shower Camp Out in the Black Rock Desert Playa August 12 and 13.
- aa. There were a record 150 kids at the Annual Kids' Fishing Day. Everyone had a great time.
- bb. WFO is involved in two local planning groups for sage-grouse. The Washoe-Modoc group has narratives prepared for all their PMUs.

- cc. In personnel news WFO has hired two NEPA coordinators. WFO lost our weeds coordinator when Chuck Neill retired. A range management specialist is transferring to Wyoming.

VI. RAC Subcommittee Reports

A. *Wild Horse Guidelines Subcommittee*

Last fall the RAC had a draft document prepared by Vern Schulze's predecessor, Susie Askew, forwarded to the BLM State Office for review. A new draft was presented to the RAC at the January meeting. The document was revised for the April meeting. As a result of finding out that the State Director did have the authority to approve the Standards and Guides the document was revised again. The Wild Horse Guidelines Subcommittee sat down in June and drafted the next document to go to the State Office. If there are major changes needed the subcommittee will revise it.

Basically wild horses and livestock use are similar so the Standards and Guides are similar. A Standard was added dealing with the individual health of the animals and one dealing with the health of the herds. The subcommittee hashed out 17 Guidelines.

Vern thanked the subcommittee members for their help. The document distributed to the RAC represents the consensus of the subcommittee.

MOVED – by John Falen that the Wild Horses and Burros Standards and Guidelines are accepted as presented.

SECOND – by Jerry Hepworth.

DISCUSSION –

APPROVED – by acclamation.

MOVED – by Jerry Hepworth that the Chair draft a letter to send to Bob Abbey expressing the appreciation of the RAC for his years as BLM Nevada State Director.

SECOND – by John Dicks.

DISCUSSION – Jerry Hepworth asked that Mark Struble and Jamie Thompson help the Chair draft the letter. The amendment was accepted by the Second.

APPROVED – by acclamation.

B. *RAC Winnemucca RMP Subcommittee*

The Winnemucca RMP Subcommittee met on July 11. Only a few members were present due to a problem transmitting BLM email invitations. The contractor went over the planning process. Those attending felt they needed more members present before

moving on. Chair Jerry Hepworth asked that members please attend the meeting tomorrow.

Sherm Swanson commented that the key question for the subgroup is how much do we [the RAC] want to get involved. We should state that intention. Jim Eidel commented I think Sherm has in the back of his mind getting on paper what we have in mind for range monitoring and management. Sherm commented I was thinking there are some big issues. If we want to have a voice in these big issues we need to roll up our sleeves and get involved now.

The NCA Subgroup was also asked to give a report. Craig Young told the RAC that the subgroup met in June in Gerlach. They had a great turnout. They spent the first day out touring specific sites that get a lot of use. The main push of the subgroup is to look at the impacts at the entrance points to the NCA because that is where a lot of the hardest use is. Craig was impressed by the condition of the Black Rock. It was felt that management doesn't understand what the initial conditions were at these sights and what they are managing for now. The subgroup talked about places for signage and usage for the visitor center.

Craig commented that Chuck Dodd's website has one of the more impressive amounts of information on real time conditions on the Black Rock and its different activities. It is a very well done website. You can really get a sense of how many people are using different sites. The site address is www.blackrockhighrock.net.

Jim Eidel commented that the group took a lot of photos dealing with OHV use. The OHV use is worst close to the access points. There were some places right above the elevation of the playa that were really torn up. The group talked about getting the photos distributed and policing those areas. The great thing about the meeting was the tremendous turnout and input. All along the edge of the playa is scrub brush which is habitat for some sensitive species. I think BLM got a whole new look at the area which is the same area being torn up by the OHV use. Craig Young commented that OHV use is the one interest not represented in the subgroup.

John Falen introduced the issue of preparation of land for sale by the BLM. He asked how the RAC can assist in this program. He told the RAC that from his conversations with former BLM State Director Bob Abbey he learned that the stumbling block for some of these sales are the funds to prepare the lands for sale. He said he was told by a member of the WFO staff, "if you can fund the preparation work we can do the sales," almost a direct quote. A few months ago Bob told John the problem would solve itself because the funds generated by the sales can be used to fund the preparation for the sales. The question is how the RAC can be involved to speed the process up and to make sure some of the funds from the sales can be earmarked for this.

Jo Simpson commented we are actually doing pretty well on equilibrium between disposal and sales in acres. The first thing that has to happen before we can sell land is that it has to be identified in a land use plan before it can be prepared for sale. The RACs

are involved in any land use planning we do. For lands to be disposed of under BACA they have to have been identified in a land use plan as of July 25 of the year the bill was passed. Jo was unsure of the year but is guessing 2002. She will have to check. There is also a capacity issue in the field offices for how much work they can do. The cultural resource items are one of the highest ticket items. Across the state BLM has a limited capacity to do work. Another piece of this is local government. It is BLM policy to consult with the local government nearest to where the land is located.

John Dicks commented, what I understood you to say, the point was made by you Jo, that the disposal issues get reviewed when a land management plan gets reviewed. That is the time when the RAC can comment on the issue. Maybe whether we have the budget to do the disposals should be considered when the land is identified.

John Falen commented that there were 800 acres of land that had been identified in the Winnemucca District that have been sold but the rest of the land in that area that has been identified for sale has not been sold. Some livestock permittees who run on that land are opposed to the land being sold. He asked when the BACA funds will be available. Jo Simpson told him they are available now. John commented then staff time is the problem. Rodger Bryan commented that is the problem. John asked how we get around that. Rodger answered that with our current manpower situation it will be a matter of prioritizing. John asked if the BACA funds can be used to hire more staff. Jo answered staff can be hired on a temporary basis.

Chair Bill Roullier asked if the RAC is interested in continuing the discussion on this issue. Several members said yes. The decision by the Chair was to end the discussion at this time because of time constraints in the agenda. The Chairman asked what the RAC wants to do with the subject. Sherm Swanson suggested that BLM look at contracting out the work and report back to the RAC. John Falen commented my main concern is to have some avenue by which the funds from BACA can be used to move the process forward by hiring more staff and have the RAC support that process. Sherm continued we have to recognize the RAC by its charter is limited in its ability to discuss staffing or budgeting. Don Hicks proposed that a place be put on the October agenda to discuss BACA and how the driving forces in the bill work. The RAC asked that each field office report at the October meeting on how much land is available for disposal, what is the status of the process for this land, what land has already been identified for disposal, and the acquisition process.

VII. Pine Nut Mountain RMP Amendment

Don Hicks welcomed the public to the meeting. My involvement with the amendment, he told them, started in May of last year when I came to the field office. I did an overview of Chapters 1 and 2 at the April RAC meeting in Winnemucca. I was asked to once again reengage the public in the Plan. This is an opportunity for us to provide some feedback to you and for the RAC to revive the subgroup. We will have the opportunity for you to tell us what you like and don't like in the Plan when we reform into subgroups.

Tom Crawford, BLM Lead for the Pine Nut Plan, told the group that Chapter 1 is the overview of the planning effort. Chapter 2 goes over the proposed Plan Amendment and the Alternatives proposed. Chapter 3 is the baseline conditions under which the land exists, a summary of the affected environment, resources and resource uses. Areas that will be affected include lands and realty; biological resources, geology, paleontology, soils and minerals; cultural resources; and Native American religious concerns, traditional cultural properties and Indian trust resources. The Tribal trust allotments make up a large component of the Plan area in Douglas County. Affected areas also include aesthetic resources; socio-economics and environmental justice concerns; recreation; Wilderness Study Area (WSA); grazing; water, wetlands and riparian areas; climate and air quality; public health and safety, hazardous materials and solid waste. There is only one WSA in the Pine Nuts, Burbank Canyon. Grazing has an impact on vegetation. There are lots of concerns about roads that may go through water, wetlands, and riparian areas and concerns about Play Areas. There are no burros in the Pine Nuts.

Chapter 4 gets into the environmental impacts. The table in the presentation given to the RAC lists anticipated impacts under Continuation of Current Management, the Proposed Plan Amendment, and the Conservation and Restoration Theme Alternative.

Noise and visual impacts are anticipated to be minor to moderate. Pinion-juniper is starting to encroach in some of the areas where it is not appropriate any more.

The impacts on lands and realty are anticipated to be moderately to negligibly beneficial. BLM would probably ask that additional utility corridors be put in other than current areas to limit impacts.

Mineral surface disturbance will be limited.

Going from open designation to a series of designated routes would limit routes in some Alternatives.

John Mudge asked what the mechanism is for mineral withdrawal. Tom told him segregation first and then approval by Congress.

BLM is not planning to do anything that would have a significant impact on socio-economics or environmental justice.

No significant change is proposed across the board on air quality or climate.

BLM is not going to propose an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) now to protect the old growth pinion juniper.

There are concerns about diminishing deer herds in the Pine Nuts.

Paleo and soils benefit from the Proposed Plan Amendment and the Conservation and Restoration Theme Alternative. Geology is not impacted under any of the three proposed Alternatives.

Today BLM is preparing the Draft Plan Amendment from the Administrative Draft. Chapter 2 and prospective management decisions have changed a little from the impacts listed and may be changed for the document available for the public review process.

After the document is put out for the 90-day comment period BLM will –

- Publish Notice of Availability (NOA) and provide 90-day public comment period
- Prepare Proposed RMP Amendment based on comments received
- Publish NOA, provide 30-day protest period and resolve protests
- Prepare Record of Decision (ROD)
- Implement, monitor and evaluate Plan decisions (Implementation occurs over the next 15 years.)

Larie Trippet asked if there will be any sessions for the public during the public comment period. Tom answered yes. The public will have the opportunity to come in during several sessions in several different communities to review the document.

There were questions from members of the public present on the availability of the document on the website since the public cannot access individual BLM office websites. Jo Simpson answered that the document will be accessible from the national BLM website. Tom answered BLM will provide CDs of the document. Hardcopies are limited because of funding.

Tom stated in answer to another question from a member of the public that there are approximately 470,000 acres in the Pine Nuts.

John Dicks commented he would like everyone present to know that Tom and Don were asked at the Winnemucca meeting to make this presentation again since there had been such a time lapse since the last presentation. He thanked Tom and Don for doing this. The idea was to let the public know that the process is still going on and that the public will have an opportunity to make comments at the appropriate time.

Jim Eidel asked what the process is for pulling something from one alternative into another. Tom answered the EIS is pushed out with alternatives. If BLM comes across comments or other direction that some other component wants to be pulled in we look at those comments and adjust the Plan Amendment to reflect those.

BLM will say when the 90-day comment period will be.

Don commented that BLM just got a new land use planning handbook in January or February that included a new format for documents. The original document the public received may not look like the present document because of the new format, but all of the same things are there. BLM is putting the original document into the new format. Don

said he can't make a promise that the document will be out in the next 60 days, but we can hope for this.

The process for the Pine Nut Plan Amendment probably began about 10 years ago. This current initiative is probably three and a half to four years old.

Jerry Hepworth again recognized Don and Tom's efforts to reengage the public. He commented the RAC is talking about adaptive management. This was very well defined in past plans. Are you thinking about that actively in this Plan? Tom answered yes adaptive management is being built in. The route design component is a good example of adaptive management. Don commented the key point is how do you make sure you get it somewhat close going in and how do you reevaluate that as things change. We will try to be somewhat prescriptive in many areas to provide the framework for that change.

A member of the public asked if acquisition of land is also in the Plan. Tom answered if someone comes forward wanting this. We will be incredibly consistent with the county master plans. Don commented we will work with the counties to make sure our actions are consistent with the counties' future plans.

A member of the public asked who determines the significance of an action. Tom answered that is an internal determination.

A member of the public asked how much acreage is being backed out of an HMA in the Brunswick Canyon area. Tom answered he wasn't sure of the acreage but it reduces the herd AML by about 21 percent.

MOVED – by Larie Trippet that the RAC create a subgroup of interested RAC members and the public to work on the Pine Nut Mountain RMP Amendment and act as an advisory group to the RAC.

SECOND – by John Dicks.

DISCUSSION –

APPROVED – by acclamation.

Pine Nut Mountain RMP Subgroup

Resource Program Area

OHV/Recreation

Recreation

Equestrian

Land Disposal

Dark Sky

Urban Interface

Indian Trust (BIA)

Tribal (Individual Indian Allotments)

Representative

Brian Doyal

John Dicks

Beth Scott

Bev Anderson

Gale Thomssen

Bob Ballou

Rita Suminski

Lana Hicks

Grazing
Wild Horse and Burro
Washoe Tribe
Douglas County
Lyon County
Carson City
Environment
ROW Corridors
Wildlife
Energy
Cultural/Archaeology

Dick Huntsberger
Frank Evans
Woods Robinson
Heather Bovat

Laura Crane

Laura Crane told the RAC she would like to be on the subgroup but will need to get off one of the other subgroups.

Sherm Swanson commented this subgroup is being created at a time that they will only be able to comment on established policy rather than create ideas. Don commented I am trying to reengage the public. I'm not sure whether a subgroup is appropriate for reengagement of people who were engaged in the original document. The hope is that the group will stimulate comment and resolve conflict.

A member of the public asked if this group would have any say. Don answered not at this point but after the draft is out and the RMP is being created.

John Dicks commented I see some possible legal problems out there. The law provides for comment during the public comment period.

Larie Trippet commented the 90-day comment period is an opportunity for individuals to make comments. The role for the subgroup is to recognize the conflicts and find some win-win resolution.

Sherm Swanson commented it sounds to me as though we are not forming a subgroup but reengaging a subgroup. I would recommend that all previous members of the subgroup be asked to reengage in this subgroup so that they can provide comments to BLM.

Jo Simpson commented as far as law goes, this group would report to the RAC at which time the comments would be reported in public.

A member of the public commented I don't see any new groups in this list. My understanding of today's meeting was that we would find out where you are on the draft. Don answered if we send out the draft and get comments, we lump the comments together into interests, but I see the subgroup as being key to sorting out the information received in the comments, between the end of the public comment period and when the final document comes out.

Tom Crawford will work on making sure all the interest groups are covered in the subgroup and make sure the names are confirmed and bring this information back to the RAC in October to make a decision on membership. Larie Trippet commented we want to keep the subgroup small in number.

Don commented we could provide context for the subgroup upfront.

VIII. Sand Mountain Update & Fee Increase Proposal

Memorial Day was the busiest holiday yet at Sand Mountain Recreation Area (SMRA) with 7,000 visitors. One of the big concerns from law enforcement and medical people was that they can't get around in many areas when there are that many visitors. There is a need to delineate the areas. There were more confrontations between visitors and law enforcement. Rangers brought up setting a carrying capacity for the area. Cellular coverage has been brought up as an issue. Double, triple and quadruple riders and riders with no helmets were another of the concerns.

A planning group that is being mediated by the Lahontan Valley Environmental Alliance is working on a Conservation Plan and Agreement to provide for the long term protection of the Sand Mountain blue butterfly and its habitat. The group is in the process of finalizing the Plan.

Actions include –

- Limiting motorized vehicles within the defined shrub habitat to specific routes
- Maintaining a program of existing trail and fence maintenance
- Increased law enforcement and recreation staff
- Closure of the dune shrub habitat to livestock
- Educating the public on the butterfly and its habitat
- SMRA regulations and proper riding practices
- Determining the need for a carrying capacity or maximum limit for the number of users allowed into the recreation area at any one time
- Development of an adaptive management plan
- Researching Kearney buckwheat and the blue butterfly life history requirements

Involved parties include the BLM, the City of Fallon, CORVA, Churchill County, Friends of Sand Mountain, Lahontan Valley Environmental Alliance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, and interested members of the public.

Larie Trippet commented that carrying capacity brings up the issue of where someone will go when you turn them away.

Elayn Briggs showed the group a map of specified routes.

Don Hicks commented that Leo Drumm, BLM Nevada State Office Outdoor Recreation Planner/Recreation, Travel and Access Coordinator, has been working with staff and others to reach consensus on what the routes should look like. They are going out and riding the routes. BLM is trying to make this a collaborative process.

Jim Eidel asked if the Alliance is coming up with a fencing plan. Don Hicks answered we have talked about the entire arena of fencing. We are working with the Alliance. We are trying to balance a blend of fencing to protect the habitat and to protect the riders.

John Dicks asked when BLM issues a citation what is the court? Elayn Briggs answered the Federal Court in Reno. The money from a fine goes back to the general treasury. BLM doesn't get any of it. John asked if you can ban certain people from the area. Elayn answered that the magistrate would have to do that. John commented BLM could request it. Elayn answered yes. Melody Stehwien, CCFO Law Enforcement, commented these people take off with no lights on a high powered quad. We can't catch these people.

The RAC suggested increasing fees. BLM is looking at other sand dune areas and a lot of other information. Last year fees generated \$170,000. It cost approximately \$225,000 to manage Sand Mountain. In order to bridge the gap between annual site fee revenues and management costs BLM is proposing to increase fees. BLM hopes to have the fees in place by October 1, 2005. BLM will continue to include the public.

Elayn showed the RAC a large laminated information sheet that is posted in the kiosk at Sand Mountain.

There has been new legislation covering fee demo areas, the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) signed by the President on December 8, 2004. One provision in the bill provides for the establishment of Recreation RACs to provide accountability for the program and the fee sites. It is still unclear how these RRACs will eventually play out. Larie Trippet commented the purpose is really limited. They can't look at locations where there are already fees.

For a number of years visitors to Sand Mountain have placed monuments to, and perhaps interred remains of, individuals who at one time enjoyed recreating at the sand dunes, at the top of Sand Mountain in a location that is now known as Monument Overlook. Until recently BLM did not have vehicles capable of reaching the top of the dune so BLM was unaware of the presence of the monuments. This is an illegal use of public lands.

BLM sent out a letter last week to the Tribes, the OHV people and the counties asking them to publicize to their people to remove the monuments by October 1, 2005. If they're not removed by October 1, BLM will remove them.

Interns/SCAs with Seeds for Success are collecting seeds of the different species at Sand Mountain. The seeds along with previously collected Kearney buckwheat plants were

sent to Kew Gardens in London. BLM should hear back from Kew Gardens by November 2005.

Kearney buckwheat mapping has been completed. It shows that the buckwheat habitat follows the area BLM had previously delineated and in addition also takes in the broader area up to the base of the dunes.

The last compliance monitoring was done over Fourth of July weekend. It shows the same level of non-compliance and intrusions as previous holidays, even though visitation was low.

BLM will be putting up some fencing test plots. Hog fencing will be the primary trial method. BLM will be fencing the voluntary routes. John Dicks commented that he has some experience with hog fencing. You don't need many strands. One of the hazards is that when the sun is just right you can't see it.

New quads should be in by the end of this week.

John Dicks asked if there are vendors out there. Elayn answered we have vendors. They pay to be out there.

Elayn suggested that it would be a good thing if the RAC made a recommendation that raising fees at Sand Mountain would be beneficial to BLM to cover administrative and law enforcement costs.

MOVED – by John Dicks that the RAC support an increase in fees to support the costs of the users of Sand Mountain so that the users will be supporting the services provided for them.

SECOND – by Ernie Paine.

APPROVED – with one abstention by Larie Trippet.

The fee at Sand Mountain is \$25 for a week, \$45 for a season. Elayn told the group that BLM followed what is done at places like Glamis and also what is done at national parks.

Larie Trippet asked for a breakdown of where the user fees are going and the costs in the future before he votes on the motion. He wants to know if the increase in fees is favorable or unfavorable to the users. Elayn could bring this detail to the next RAC meeting or email it to the RAC.

Cost in the future would be for emergency services and rangers, especially on holiday weekends, and for an improved fee collection system.

Larie Trippet asked Richard Hilton, Friends of Sand Mountain, if his people would like to see where the fees are going. Richard said people ask him that all the time. Don Hicks said CCFO can provide a breakdown. Larie also commented he appreciates that we're telling the RAC but how is BLM telling the users. Can you send an email to Richard so

that he can put it on the Friends of Sand Mountain website? Don answered that they can send a pie chart to Richard.

Sherm Swanson commented, I assume that you have estimates of the average stay out there. Do you use those estimates to tell you what the revenue would be if you had 100% compliance with the fees charged? Elayn answered that is in our business plan. Sherm continued, so I'm guessing that you could have made up for your deficit if you had 100% compliance. Elayn answered we could but we would need more people out there. Sherm continued, the main point I'm trying to figure out is that the compliant people are subsidizing the noncompliant people. I would rather raise the compliance than vote for a rise in fees. Elayn answered you don't want to spend all of your money trying to collect fees.

Ernie Paine asked if law enforcement is only BLM or county also. Elayn answered it is only BLM at this time. We bring in a lot of people from other BLM offices.

John Dicks commented I don't sense on the part of these people that they are trying to jack up the fee. I have the feeling that the BLM managers are behind the curve in some of these services, so I think the motion is appropriate.

Jim Eidel asked Richard Hilton to let people know that the RAC did see a \$55,000 deficit. Richard answered I don't think the people out there would object to a rise in fees. If you increase the fees a lot and then make the area smaller there will be an objection for that. I don't think the fees should be increased very much based on the area that is useable out there. Up until two years ago there were no fees. A few years ago there were fees that covered the services at Sand Mountain. Are you looking for 100% coverage of services?

Jamie Thompson commented that the special recreation fees, for permitted recreation activities, have gone up in the past few years. In special recreation fees there is 100% coverage. People do have to pay their own way.

Dan Peterson, CORVA, commented two weeks ago a contingent from California spent a week in DC lobbying the legislators involved in funds for recreation to increase those funds. We're doing what we can to get funds for you people.

IX. Rangeland Monitoring Handbook

Sherm Swanson presented a review of the Rangeland Monitoring Handbook and recommendations to the RAC.

He distributed the Public Lands Council/U.S. Forest Service Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that calls for developing cooperative monitoring programs. He told the RAC that BLM is required by law to maintain the land so that it maintains the

rangeland health as well as maintaining the ranch industry. If we no longer have the budget for the monitoring task, then it is incumbent on us to figure out a way to get that monitoring done. BLM has no way to tell whether the rangeland health is good, so they assume it isn't. The permittees can do a better job of managing and the management agency can do a better job of managing with that information from the permittees; how many animals were in what pasture in what season, what was the management level. Short term monitoring is the record of year-to-year activities and what happened during that year. Short term monitoring leads to long term monitoring. Cooperative monitoring with the permittee involved in the short term monitoring will allow the agency to concentrate on the long term monitoring.

Developing a cooperative program is not a simple thing to do. A lot of agreements have to be made. Essentially the problem comes down to the local monitoring plan. The upshot of a monitoring tour in Elko was that the 1984 Rangeland Monitoring Handbook needed to be revised. It didn't include ways to do riparian monitoring. It didn't have a focus on the objectives of monitoring. It was agreed by the people on the tour to take a look at the Nevada handbook. A group has been developing a draft for the past two years. The group is looking at the first draft and will hopefully have a second draft out this fall.

There is also a focus on some monitoring that was not focused on before. Hopefully we are producing a modern version. In tandem with this is the MOU that calls for cooperative monitoring.

The Northeastern Great Basin RAC took on this issue. They talked about cooperative monitoring and its importance to the permittees. Their discussions led to the document that was sent out to the RAC. The key idea is to leverage the Bureau's dwindling work force with defensible range monitoring information collected in a cooperative fashion by federal land grazers.

The question is what does this RAC want to do in taking on this issue? What role do we recommend for BLM to take on? What role do we want the permittees to take on?

Jerry Hepworth commented that he liked the concept. I believe there is a policy BLM-wide, but when you don't have the resources to employ more people it is hard to follow the policy. I believe the concept is a sound one.

Don Hicks commented, from an agency perspective the concept is indeed sound. We have 90 active allotments and approximately 80 permittees. So even with the joint monitoring strategy you would have to set standards as to what you wanted to monitor. The standards or approach needs to apply to all of BLM Nevada. I like the idea of partnerships. The permittees know a lot more of what is happening on the ground than the managers.

Rodger Bryan told the RAC I agree 100%. With our shrinking budgets we need to look at any cooperation we can. We definitely need standards across the state.

Sherm continued, the flip side of having a single technique is that only one technique would not answer all the questions and all places are not the same. We have a suite of techniques in our handbook. Different techniques in different areas would cause a problem in managing data.

Jim Eidel commented many managers have told me the first thing that falls out of any budget is the money you put in it for monitoring. The biggest problems with respect to monitoring are scale. A lot of things that Sherm refers to can be done on a project scale. There is no such thing as adaptive management without monitoring. We're talking about putting into all management plans adaptive management so monitoring has to be put into the plans. It came up in the Winnemucca meeting that BLM was looking at giving the responsibility of monitoring the rangelands to the permittees. A permittee can't be asked to monitor because it has to be done with unbiased data. The NCA Subgroup is already looking at monitoring. There is a person on that committee who agreed to do some flights for aerial data of the NCA in conjunction with Burning Man. I support what Sherm is saying. I think cooperative monitoring has to be done. The RAC should probably look at this in respect to BLM management plans.

Ernie Paine commented from a permittee's perspective, I would echo that the first thing to go is your range con or your monitoring dollars. From a permittee perspective we already do range monitoring. We go to workshops to learn to do monitoring. Then it falls to a group like this with the help of Sherm to put together a handbook that we can use. Permittees are tasked with a monitoring schedule for our allotments.

John Dicks commented I would be very supportive of this. Different agencies that have issued licenses for different settings have required monitoring as part of the licensing. At first that's a little repulsive to the licensee, but not when you think of [the other alternative] a government guy sitting over his shoulder and doing it. But then the licensee realizes that the data benefits him, too. The permittee is out there on the allotment and knows what is going on.

Sherm continued, management by inventory for the objective of making management decisions by numbers is not using all the tools in the toolbox. The paradigm shift to monitoring by utilization from monitoring by numbers happened about 20 years ago. Utilization has become a very important tool in the toolbox of monitoring. Although utilization is important, it is not, in my mind, sufficient. There will be some monitoring component in the rangeland schools but it is my feeling that it won't be emphasized. In combination, the long term monitoring and 'what did you do last week', is the way to really make some progress.

Sherm asked if the RAC liked what the Northeastern Nevada RAC did. Do we want to ratify what they did or do we want to produce our own?

Bill Roullier asked if there is anything in the Northeastern product that Sherm thought doesn't fit us. Sherm answered no except some of the vernacular.

John Dicks commented, to me the main problems will be getting everyone to talk the same language.

Jim Eidel commented, I see the ultimate goal of this as standards and guidelines for habitat.

Sherm commented, the real place where the rubber meets the road is the development of allotment specific monitoring plans.

Rodger Bryan commented we certainly have done that in the past. It's a great idea. It's just having the people to implement it.

Jerry Hepworth commented, you have to think of incentives and a way to market this to people so they will agree to it.

Russ Suminski, CCFO Lead Rangeland Management Specialist, commented we have tried to involve the permittees with monitoring on their allotments. We contacted the permittees with regard to this. We got a response from only one permittee. It didn't work with the Forest Service. I'm not optimistic that it will work here. There isn't a lot of agreement on the part of the permittees to do this. They think monitoring is the responsibility of the agencies and I agree. The monitoring data has to be accurate. I don't see it working in hearings for instance if the permittees do the monitoring. We need a minimum of four rangeland management specialists. We have two. There is a myriad of paper work involved in it. We were covering 20 allotments a year fully, long term monitoring, with four people. We spend the majority of our time now doing paperwork. We get short term monitoring on half of our allotments now. It's probably a minimum look see at this point.

Sherm commented there is an old saying, in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king. If a permittee takes the time to do monitoring he becomes the one-eyed man when the agency has no monitoring. Some are bitter about the agency not doing the monitoring but they're not doing it either. The kind of management we're doing is causing lands to cross ecological thresholds. There are problems with cooperative monitoring but there are problems with managing too.

Jim Eidel commented that the place to start is why the cooperative monitoring didn't work with the Forest Service. I would hate to see BLM start cooperative monitoring without knowing that. What were the Forest Service permittees being asked to do?

Russ Suminski commented with the Forest Service there was a total lack of interest on the part of the permittees. They were asked to run transects, utilization monitoring.

Ernie Paine commented I think over time the lack of interest will probably change. I don't expect the budget situation to change. Over time if there's interest or not, it's going to be a requirement. Sooner or later in most cases permittees face environmental

pressures to change their operations and you have to have a basic understanding of how they're trying to change it.

Craig Young asked if there is a requirement to fill out certain records. Ernie Paine answered it's not required. So you change it from not required to required.

Jerry Hepworth commented you need to find out what the institutional barriers are.

John Mudge asked if there is any way that a percentage of the fees paid could be paid back to the permittee for doing the monitoring. Don Hicks commented present laws wouldn't allow that. Jim Eidel commented some percentage of those fees should be used by BLM to monitor.

Sherm commented that having this opportunity in place will at least allow those ranches that participate to be managed better.

John Dicks commented I don't sense much consensus around this table which surprises me. I would think that the BLM managers would want to know everything they could about those cows.

Chair Roullier commented I get the sense that we want to move forward.

MOVED – by Sherm Swanson that our RAC embrace the approach taken by the Northeastern RAC (to leverage the Bureau's dwindling work force with defensible range monitoring information collected in a cooperative fashion by federal land grazers) and urge the agency to use this approach appropriately on public lands and that BLM will use this process.

SECOND – by Jerry Hepworth.

DISCUSSION – The RAC voted on the motion but it was then brought up that the members need to vote by POD and there were not enough members present in each POD to make the vote valid. The motion was withdrawn by the Mover with the concurrence of the Second.

Jim Eidel commented I would like to take a step back and see what we need to do this right. Maybe Russ and Sherm and I and somebody else from BLM could sit down and make a better motion.

Jerry Hepworth commented I think this is part of the implementation.

Sherm told the RAC the handbook will probably have a signature page where each of the agencies will sign and endorse it. My sense is that the handbook group has not adequately embraced cooperative monitoring.

John Gebhardt commented I want to know if the data collected in cooperative monitoring will be held up in court. Sherm told him that is something that the Northeastern RAC considered at length. Number one in the second group of rolls and responsibilities on

page two of the document produced by the Northeastern RAC says NDOW will be one of the cooperators.

Jim Eidel commented that to be upheld in court you're going to have to monitor the monitors. That's just adding to the problems you have.

Sherm commented that there is a thirst for monitoring data.

John Gebhardt commented, I want what we collect to be viable data.

Larie Trippet asked if the permittees are so busy that they don't even want to consider monitoring even though they know they need to do it.

Jim Eidel asked Russ Suminski what he would like the RAC to do. Russ answered I think the agency needs support for budget and personnel to do the monitoring. We don't have the people in the agency to even support cooperative monitoring now or even set it up.

Jerry Hepworth commented BLM should be asked to give us information on what can and can't be done.

John Dicks called the question on the motion.

In withdrawing the motion (see motion discussion above) Sherm asked to bring this topic up at a future meeting with information from BLM on what monitoring data they have, how many allotments have been monitored to what extent, what monitoring BLM plans to do and has not been able to do and a recommendation from the agency that they would like the RAC to endorse.

John Gebhardt commented the RAC should encourage BLM to do more monitoring.

X. Public Comment Period

Michon Eben, Cultural Resource Coordinator for the Reno/Sparks Indian Colony, told the RAC members that since they are really committed to the Northwestern Great Basin Area, we would like to comment on the Pah Rah Range, specifically the Dry Lakes area and the ACEC. The Reno/Sparks Indian Colony would like to put on record how important it is to put in place an effective management plan to protect cultural sites at the Dry Lakes. We applaud and support the designation of this area as an ACEC and we appreciate the BLM restricting the area from OHVs and mining. The final Southern Washoe County Urban Interface Plan Amendment (interface plan) recognizes the threats of the increased activity from the growing Truckee Meadows region to the extent that the plan further recommends steps to protect this significant resource. In referencing the BLM's Interface Plan, it states that "The area must have special management attention to protect the relevant and important values..." We feel that the BLM is permitting some

activities without provisions in the management plan to guide them in its decision to approve or deny projects. The Reno/Sparks Indian Colony strongly encourages BLM to hold in abeyance all project applications in the vicinity of the Dry Lakes area until a site-specific, detailed ACEC plan and EA is completed in consultation with the Native American Tribes. The Tracy to Silver Lake Transmission Line project is of particular concern. People don't always obey, but there are people vandalizing a cultural site.

Jeannette Dahl, Director Lahontan Valley Environmental Alliance, told the RAC: we are coordinating the Sand Mountain Butterfly Conservation Group. We're getting a tremendous amount of cooperation from BLM at this time and want to thank BLM for this. This effort has a lot of support in the city and the county. We as an organization that represents the county, city and Irrigation District are not looking just to BLM for funds to support this effort. The community is behind us. We have had cooperation from the allotment holders group. We are getting a great amount of cooperation from the Navy and the [Fallon Paiute-Shoshone] Tribe also.

Richard Hilton, Friends of Sand Mountain, asked for a copy of the cooperative monitoring MOU to use as a sample for putting together an MOU between Friends of Sand Mountain and BLM. He told the RAC, I saw several of you cringe when you heard the helicopter was out there [at Sand Mountain] 11 times [over Memorial Day Weekend]. Things do happen when people are out there doing foolish things. This pink flyer that is going around trying to inform the people needs to go around more than on Memorial Day Weekend. That has to be spread out in a larger scope on every weekend. Having a yearly pass you don't stop at the gate. You don't go to the bathrooms if you have a motorhome. It was brought up in our report that we are putting in the butterfly plan an adaptive management plan and monitoring.

On the subject of the monuments that are out there – as a devil's advocate – different people have told me – I don't agree with some of the things that are put up there, but a majority of the things are just metal plaques. This is a solemn place to them. It is a visual spot where they are. If these monuments are illegal remove them. But there are monuments out in the Salt Flats that are visible, put up to some babies that died on a wagon train. There is a helicopter monument out there. Those should be removed. If it's illegal everything should be removed. Dan Peterson has tried several times to meet with the [Fallon Paiute-Shoshone] Tribe on this issue. They have not replied.

Dan Peterson, CORVA, told the RAC I was not aware that the vegetative area had been legally closed. If it has not been legally closed how can you write citations out there? Someone is not being notified.

I have been asked by the club that started putting the monuments out there to find out what could be done to keep the monuments out there. I have gathered some information on the loved ones whose ashes are scattered up there. We have documentation. At this point that becomes a sacred burial ground for the rest of the world. I have turned this information over to the higher ups in the organization. I won't know for about three weeks how the people in the organization will reply to this. I would appreciate the RAC's assistance with BLM to allow those monuments to remain there. I want BLM to

protect the plaques that are up there. I believe that the rest of the world has to share the mountain being a sacred site. I have written many letters to the [Fallon Paiute-Shoshone] Tribe saying I want to meet with them. Nothing has happened from that particular side.

I believe monitoring can be accomplished by the ordinary person by the way the monitoring is set up. If you can set up a table-sized plot and monitor the plants there, then measure them with a ruler, look at a plant and say it wasn't here last year. You can do photo points if BLM will tell us where they are. BLM won't let us know where the photo points are. I don't know why. You have a challenge in the monitoring process. How we deal with it is everyone's problem.

Frank Evans, wild horses, told the RAC I understand that the HMA [in the Pine Nuts] is going to be cut back 20 percent. Is it going to be expanded anywhere else and is the water source going to be expanded anywhere else? In answer Don Hicks said he would make sure that Mr. Evans was given this information.

Larie Trippet commented that Dan [Petersen] brought up an interesting point about nine citations in the closed area. Could Don Hicks tell him what area it was that was closed? Was it a citation or a warning that was given? What is the action that closed that area?

XI. Meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Note: The next meeting is the Tri-RAC Meeting in Elko October 20-21. A van will probably leave from the BLM State Office in Reno. Mark Struble will get more information to the RAC.